

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS

1. A method for forming a meltblown web, comprising:
forming fibers by extruding a molten thermoplastic
material through a plurality of channels in a die as molten
5 filaments;

attenuating the molten filaments with a high velocity
fluid stream to reduce the diameter of the filaments;

depositing the attenuated filaments on a collecting
surface to form a web of randomly dispersed meltblown
10 fibers;

heating at least a tip apex portion of the die defining
outlets at the ends of the channels through which the
thermoplastic material is extruded with a heating element
disposed relative to the tip apex portion; and

15 maintaining the tip portion at a temperature sufficient
to keep the thermoplastic material in a desired molten state
primarily with the heating element so that the attenuating
air may be maintained at a temperature below the melting
point of the thermoplastic material.

2. The method as in claim 1, comprising heating the
die tip apex portion with an infrared lamp.

3. The method as in claim 1, comprising heating the
die tip apex portion with electric cartridge heaters.

4. The method as in claim 1, comprising heating the
die tip apex portion with electrical current directed
through the die.

5. The method as in claim 1, comprising heating the die tip apex portion with a heated fluid conducted through at least one passageway defined through the die.

6. The method as in claim 1, comprising heating the die tip apex portion directly with a heating element contained in or on the die.

7. The method as in claim 1, comprising heating the die tip apex portion indirectly with a heating element disposed adjacent to and spaced from the die tip apex portion.